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RUEHWR/AMEMBASSY WARSAW 0275  
RUEHCD/AMCONSUL CIUDAD JUAREZ 0255  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LAGOS 000262

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STATE FOR AF/W  
STATE FOR INR/AA  
WARSAW FOR LISA PIASCIK  
CIUDAD JUAREZ FOR DONNA BLAIR  
ISTANBUL FOR TASHAWNA SMITH  
SAO PAULO FOR ANDREW WITHERSPOON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/11/2017  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [NI](#) [ELECTIONS](#)  
SUBJECT: AD CALLS FOR ELECTION POSTPONEMENT; QUESTIONS  
INEC'S AGENDA

REF: 06 LAGOS 1350

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Classified By: Consul General Brian L. Browne for reasons 1.4 (b and d)

11. (C) Summary: In a March 31 meeting with Consul General, Chief Reuben Fasoranti, chairman of the pre-eminent Yoruba social organization Afenifere, said there have been no election preparations in Ondo State, and he proposed that the Independent National Election Commission's (INEC) failure could be an attempt to prolong President Obasanjo's term. Fasoranti, also a leader in the Democratic People's Alliance (DPA), believes election-related violence could escalate to the point of national emergency, giving President Obasanjo justification. End summary.

AD Finds Replacement Candidate

12. (C) Following the death of Alliance for Democracy (AD) presidential candidate Adebayo Adefarati on March 29, Chief Fasoranti told Consul General that the AD was in the throes of finding a replacement candidate. (Note: Although Fasoranti is a member of the DPA, the links between the DPA and AD are close and cordial. Many in the DPA were once in the AD, and the fission was amicable. Moreover, Fasoranti was a close personal friend of the late Adefarati, and both men are from Ondo State. The AD later picked Pere Ajuwa as Adefarati's replacement and demanded elections be shifted by two weeks. However, a Federal High Court in Abuja on April 10 held that INEC has no authority to shift the elections. In any event, the AD has very little hope of capturing the presidency. End note)

AD Suspects Hidden Agenda Behind Election Prep

13. (C) Fasoranti told Consul General that no election preparations were evident in Ondo State, including hiring of local poll workers, and that INEC would not be ready for the April 14 election. Nonetheless, the AD is continuing to campaign in hopes elections occur. Fasoranti suggested a hidden agenda was behind INEC's failure to prepare. He

believed INEC's languor was intended to facilitate President Obasanjo's tenure extension. As a result of a sloppy exercise, violence could escalate to the point of a national emergency, he added, at which point Obasanjo would have justification to remain in power.

14. (C) Fasoranti also expressed his disapproval of the National Assembly decision to recess until early May, and questioned whether or not it would be called back into session in the event of a national emergency. He speculated that, without a National Assembly in session, President Obasanjo could suspend the constitution and have an excuse to install the military and remain in power for an indefinite period until stability had been restored.

15. (C) According to Fasoranti, up to 40 million people may be disenfranchised, although fully two-thirds of that number may actually be on the voter roll. He reasoned the recessed National Assembly has yet to amend the Electoral Act to extend the period of voter registration. Fasoranti explained the law needed to extend the date for registration to validate the large number of voters who registered subsequent to the termination date currently stated in the law. There is also a question of where voters who registered outside their districts will be able to vote due to restricted movement on election day.

Agbaje and Buhari Have Ondo AD Backing  
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16. (C) According to Fasoranti, the DPA Lagos gubernatorial candidate Jimmy Agbaje has a strong chance of winning. Agbaje has been able to exploit the split that occurred when current Governor Bola Tinubu left the AD for the Action Congress (AC). Fasoranti added that the PDP is "desperate to get Lagos," and it may resort to all manner of chicanery and

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worse to steer the election toward the PDP.

17. (C) Fasoranti said the DPA is supporting All Nigeria People,s Party (ANPP) presidential candidate Muhammadu Buhari. With the DPA's backing, Buhari now has more support in the South West geo-political zone than in the past. Furthermore, AC presidential candidate Atiku will be unable to contest the elections, no matter how many times he goes to court and wins his cases, and the ANPP will likely gain Atiku,s supporters.  
BROWNE